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ABSTRACT

This study designed a music program for improving academic skills of first grade students after the teaching staff found the students doing average work in the classroom. The school involved in the study was located in an urban, middle class community in Northern Illinois. Results of standardized tests showed the extent of the academic problems of students in the classroom. Analysis of probable cause data found that teachers consistently did not integrate music into their curriculum. Although teachers valued music as an important part of the curriculum, their schedules did not allow enough time for consistent implementation in their classrooms. In addition, the classroom teachers and the music specialist had not worked together to integrate music with the first grade curriculum. Two categories of intervention selected by the music specialist were the use of a rhythmic movement curriculum and the use of whole language activities. The solutions were related to the first grade curriculum as defined by the targeted group's teacher. The results of the intervention indicated that all symptoms of the original problem were reduced. As projected, the students' academic skills improved through integration of the first grade reading curriculum with the music program. A survey found that the majority of students in the targeted group enjoyed the intervention. Appendixes contain a teacher survey, music lesson plans, Solar System Songs, a Student Survey, and a literature list. Contains 20 references. (Author/CK)

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IMPROVING FIRST GRADE ACADEMIC SKILLS THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF MUSIC INTO THE FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Education

Saint Xavier University - IRI
Field-Based Master's Program

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Action Research Final Report
Site: Rockford, IL
Submitted: April 26, 1994

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Charity Hart-Davis SITE: Rockford I
DATE: April 26, 1994

TITLE: Improving First Grade Academic Skills Through Music Activities

ABSTRACT: This report describes a music program for improving academic skills of first grade students in an urban, middle-class community located in northern Illinois. Originally, the problem was cited by teaching staff who found the students doing average work in the classroom. The administration of standardized tests showed the extent of this problem.

Analysis of probable cause data found that teachers did not consistently integrate music into their curriculum. Although teachers valued music as an important part of the curriculum, their schedules did not allow enough time for consistent implementation in their classrooms. In addition, the classroom teachers and the music specialist had not worked together to integrate music with the first grade curriculum.

Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with the analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two categories of intervention by the music specialist. The two categories were the use of a rhythmic movement curriculum and the use of whole language activities. The solutions were related to the first grade curriculum as defined by the targeted group's teacher.

All symptoms of the original problem were reduced as projected: the student's academic skills improved through integration of the first grade reading curriculum with the music program.

Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Problem Statement

The first grade students of an elementary school in an urban Midwestern city have average academic skills as evidenced by teacher observation and standardized test scores. The intent of this researcher is to improve academic skills of the targeted first grade class.

School Description

The school referred to in this study is a K-6 elementary school in the southeast section of an urban, Midwestern city. Total enrollment of the school is 446 students. The racial/ethnic background of the student population is: 79.1 percent White, 15.7 percent Afro-American, 3.1 percent Hispanic, 1.8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.2 percent Native American.

Low income students make up 22.4 percent of the student population and low middle income students make up 77.6 percent of the student population. Limited-English proficient students make up 1.1 percent of the student population. The attendance rate at the school is 94.9 percent and the student mobility rate is 13.7 percent. Forty-five percent of the students are bussed to the school. This figure includes students who live in the attendance area as well as students who are bussed for integration purposes.

The school's staff consists of one all-day kindergarten teacher, one morning and afternoon kindergarten teacher, three first grade teachers, three second grade teachers, three third grade teachers, two fourth grade teachers two fifth grade teachers, and two sixth grade teachers. Special teachers include one full-time music specialist, one part-time art specialist, and one part-time physical education specialist. The support staff is made up of a part-time psychologist, a part-time social worker, a part-time speech teacher, a part-time nurse, a full-time learning disabilities teacher and a full-time librarian. The school has a full-time principal.

The school was built in 1958. It is all on one level with a primary wing and an intermediate wing. The school has twenty classrooms. Classroom teachers have their own rooms as do the art and music specialist The gym also serves as the lunchroom. The principal, secretary, nurse and other support staff have their own offices. The building has a media center and a computer lab.

The school has a very active Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) The P.T.O. plans fund raisers and social events for the school. Ninety-five percent of the parents involved in the P.T.O. are neighborhood parents. The other five percent are parents of special permit or bussed students.

Class size at the kindergarten level is from 19 to 24 students. First grade classes are between 22 to 24 students. The second grades are at the maximum of 26 students each. The third grades have from 24 to 27 students. Fourth grades have

24 and 25 students. The fifth grade have 28 and 29 students. The sixth grades have 28 and 29 students.

Community Description

The school is located in a large Midwestern city, seventy-five miles from Chicago. The city covers a fifty square mile area, and according to the 1990 census has a population of 139,426 people. The city is a manufacturing community with high employment concentrations in machine, metal working and transportation equipment industries. Additional sources of employment include services, trade retail, government and wholesale trade. The per capita income is $14,109.00. Data on adults twenty-five years of age and older showed that 74.8 percent have completed high school or higher and 18.17 percent have earned bachelor's degree or higher. The census figures also showed that 77.9 percent are White, 14.4 percent are African-American, 4.0 percent are Hispanic, 1.5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2 percent are Native American and 2.0 percent are comprised of other races.

The school district is composed of 39 elementary schools, four middle schools and four high schools. The total enrollment of the district is 28,045 students. The racial and ethnic background of the student population as of September 30, 1992, is 68.1 percent White, 23.4 percent African-American, 5.8 percent Hispanic, 2.5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.3 percent Native American/Alaskan.

The school district has a history of financial difficulties

In 1976, the arts, sports and extra curricular activities were eliminated in the schools because of the failure of a tax referendum to support those programs. Insufficient revenue is a continuous threat to the school district.

During May of 1989, a lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court against the school district. The lawsuit charges the district with long-time discrimination against minority students, An interim agreement is currently being implemented in the school district.

The court order calls for three magnet elementary magnet schools which are now in operation. The magnet schools draw White students to predominantly minority areas. Minority students have the opportunity to attend schools in predominantly White areas through a voluntary transfer program. During the 1992-1993 school year, 27.9 percent of the elementary students attended a school other than that in their own attendance area. All high schools and middle schools were integrated during the 12992-1993 school year. Twenty-seven of the 39 elementary schools were integrated under the voluntary transfer program.

The interim court order also provides moneys to implement inservices and materials to the targeted schools. The school district is undertaking a change from basic school management to one of site-based management. This plan calls for each school to develop a mission statement, complete long range goals and develop specific action plans to carry out the goals.

The community is becoming more involved in shaping educational goals of the district. An ad hoc committee of

concerned citizens has been formed to discuss their concerns about the school system. The committee is being led by a group of eight local business men.

Higher education is represented in this city by a four year college and a two year community college. There are several branches of specialized education in the medical and business fields from several universities. A major university is approximately 40 miles away.

Regional and National Context of the Problem

David Lazear discusses the musical/rhythmic intelligence in his book Seven Ways of Knowing. He cites Don Campbell, author of Introduction to the Musical Brain, who asks if "music's survival in our educational system is being endangered as more and more school districts eliminate music from the instant there are financial problems" (Lazear, 1991 p.96). Campbell wants to know, "are we going to be able to keep the public and financially-ruling boards interested in music class by presenting a few concerts per year and an enjoyable class where students have the attitude of non-learning" (Lazear, 1991 p.96).

When the economy and a frugal legislature cause school districts to be in financial trouble, debates on priorities begin. The arts, especially music are included in these debates. This happens at with the state and the local school board levels (Butler, 1992).

Music education is too often thought of as a frill. Too many administrators think music education is only preparing

for two or three concerts a year (Butler, 1992).

Throughout education's history, students have been "required to express their knowledge in what is often labeled a "logico-mathematical manner" (Goldberg, 1992). History is depicted through a culture's artwork but very few history classes teach from that perspective.

According to Karen Gallas (1992), young children depend on play, movement, song, dramatic play and artistic activity as a way to make sense of the world. Traditional schooling and parenting pressure causes these pastimes to give way to mainly adult styles of communication. This adult style of communication is not a natural process of "expressive maturation" (Goldberg, 1992 p. 620).

States that have adopted goals that make the arts a basic part of education have been far from making this a reality (Martorelli, 1992). Few states are "ready or willing to allocate the necessary resources for staff development, and hiring specialists who could provide skill training in all the arts" (Martorelli, 1992 p. 38).

Few schools provide support for the classroom teachers to effectively integrate the arts into their teaching. Pressure from math, science, language arts and social studies advocacy set other priorities for state departments of education (Martorelli, 1992).

According to Jane Remer (1992), "There is precious little arts activity of any type to be found in the vast majority of our public schools" (Martorelli, 1992 p.40). Some states have

art and music specialists but classroom teachers who often feel unprepared, are often looked upon to and relied upon to teach the arts.

In Ron Brandt's conversation with Howard Gardner, Gardner states that music and art are the first to go whenever there is a financial crunch. As children get older, they receive less and less arts education. Arts education may be important in kindergarten but by the eighth grade it is no longer important unless the child is professionally oriented (Brandt, 1988). According to Gardner, some people feel that in order to justify the experience of a subject in school, results from the subject must be assessed. These people try to asses the arts in the same way other subjects are assessed with multiple-choice type assessments. The arts have personal meaning and emotional content and are often subjective. It is often difficult to assess the arts, especially in the traditional way (Brandt, 1988).

The educational priorities of America 2000 regard the mind as fixed rather than developed. Elliot Eisner claims that "the prevailing conceptions of the arts are based on a massive misunderstanding of their role in human development" (Eisner, 1992 p. 595).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Background

Chapter one pointed out how many school districts have implemented arts education into their curricula. The statistics from the school districts show how students' academic skills had improved from the teaching of arts education. However, when school districts' finances are low or cut by state and local governments, the arts are usually the first to be cut out of the curriculum.

Locally, the arts programs were completely cut from the school district's curriculum in 1976. During the 1979 school year, some of the arts classes were slowly added back into the curriculum. Today, during the 1993-1994 school year, arts education is present at the elementary level. The elementary music program is a general music program. The elementary instrumental program was never reinstated after 1976.

According to the school district's professional agreement from July, 1991 to June of 1994, elementary teachers are to be provided with at least five planning periods per week. Certified art and music specialists as well as physical education specialists are to instruct the teachers' classes during the planning period. Students are suppose to have music and art with the specialists at least once a week. If scheduling allows,

some classes may have art or music three times a week.

Problem Evidence

The Stanford Achievement Test is administered every spring at the local elementary schools. All grades first through sixth are tested. The test results of the first grade classes of the study site are shown in the following four tables.

Table 1
Number and Percent of First Grade Total Reading Scores In Percentile Range,
National Comparisons of the Stanford Achievement Test Scores
1992

Percentile Range	Total Reading#	Total Reading%
76 - 99	24	35%
51 - 75	19	28%
26 - 50	16	23%
1 - 25	10	14%

N = 69

The test results in table 1 showed 51 percent of the first grade students scored in the 26 - 75 percentile range. The data presented in table 1 indicated that 37 percent of the students scored below the 50th percentile range.

Table 2
Number and Percent of First Grade Math Scores In Percentile Ranges,
National Comparison of Stanford Achievement Scores
1992

Percentile Range	Total Math#	Total Math%
76 - 99	31	45%
51 - 75	16	23%
26 - 50	16	23%
1 - 25	6	9%

N = 69

Test results in table 2 showed 46 percent of the first grade students scored in the 26 - 75 percentile range and nine percent of the students scored in the 1 - 25 percentile range in total math scores. The data presented in table 2 indicated that 32 percent of the students scored below the 50th percentile range.

Table 3
Number and Percent of First Grade Total Reading Scores In Percentile Ranges on
Stanford Achievement Test
1992

Percentile Range	Total Reading#	Total Reading%
76 - 99	25	36%
51 - 75	24	35%
26 - 50	15	22%
1 - 25	5	7%

N = 69

Table 3 presents total reading scores locally. The data showed 57 percent of the students scored in the 26 - 75 percentile range. The data presented in table 3 indicate 29

percent of the students scored below the median level.

Table 4
Number and Percent of First Grade Total Math Scores In Percentile Ranges on Stanford Achievement Test 1992

Percentile Range	Total Math#	Total Math%
76 - 99	28	41%
51 - 75	19	28%
26 - 50	17	25%
1 - 25	5	7%

N = 69

Table 4 presents total math scores locally. Fifty-three percent of the students scored in the 26 - 75 percentile range. The data indicated that 32 percent of the students scored below the 50th percentile.

A summary of the data from the Stanford Achievement Test scores indicated that approximately one-third of the first grade students' academic skills were at or below the 50th percentile. This data suggested that students are struggling with math and reading.

Probable Cause of Problems

The probable cause data gathered from the site of the study used a teacher questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire was given to all the first grade teachers. The questionnaire showed the following: 1) Sixty-seven percent of the teachers felt music should be integrated with the reading curriculum every day,

2) Thirty-three percent felt music

should be integrated into the curriculum once a week,

3) Thirty-three percent of the teachers felt music should be ntegrated with all subjects once a month,

4) Thirty-three percent of the teachers felt music should be integrated with all subjects once a week,

5) Thirty-three percent of the teachers felt music should be integrated with all subjects every day,

6) Sixty-seven percent of the teachers never taught music as a separate subject,

7) Thirty-three percent of the teachers taught music as a separate subject every day,

8) Thirty-three percent of the teachers taught music with other subjects once in a while,

9) Thirty-three percent of the teachers taught music with other subjects once in a while,

10) Thirty-three percent of the teachers taught music with other subjects every day,

11) Sixty-seven percent of the teachers never worked with the music specialist to integrate music with their curriculum,

12) Thirty-three percent of the teachers worked with the music specialist once in a while to integrate music with their curriculum,

13) All of the teachers' classes had music with the music specialist three times a week,

14) All of the teachers would like to integrate music into all subject areas working with the music specialist.

The results of the questionnaire showed inconsistency in the classroom teachers' use of music in their own classrooms. The classroom teachers never or very seldom worked with the music specialist to integrate music with their curriculum. All the teachers stated that they would like to work with the music specialist to integrate music with their curriculum.

The probable cause data found in the literature was categorized into three categories: attitudes towards arts classes, lack of time in the curriculum for arts classes, and classroom teachers' insufficient knowledge in the teaching of the arts.

In 1990, President Bush released his America 2000 report. The report listed educational goals set by the President for the year 2000. The arts were completely left out. The educational priorities of America 2000 are rooted in the beliefs that the mind is fixed rather than developed, knowledge is the exclusive property of science, and intelligence is limited to forms of abstract thought dependent upon the use of logic (Eisner, 1992). This results in schools that have an " antiseptic environment that seldom provides even a nod to our sensuous, poetic or imaginative side" (Eisner, 1992 p. 595) Students need to have the opportunity to experience the arts and to " learn to create

a life worth living. " (Eisner, 1992 p. 595)

Through out the history of American education, the arts have never been looked upon as a legitimate part of the academic curriculum. The arts are taught to enrich the lives of small groups of talented children. (Oddleifson, 1993) " The essential importance of the arts to general education is simply not understood by either parents or educators." (Oddleifson, 1993 p. 5).

Unfortunately, the school districts cut out or completely abandon arts classes when school funds are slashed. When school districts have the funds and include the arts classes as part of their curriculum, time allotted for classes is very little. In the U.S., arts classes are generally taught two hours a week. Arts classes are not a required subject at the secondary level (Eisner, 1992).

According to Martorelli (1992 p. 40) " few classroom teachers feel qualified to provide children with quality artistic experiences." The state of Illinois does not require future teachers to take art and music classes for certification even though teachers are very important in providing the success and continuity of children's arts education (Radner and Prole, 1993).

A list of probable causes gathered from the literature and the site of the study included the following elements:

1) A lack of cooperative teaching between the classroom teachers and the music specialist,
2) not enough time for classroom teachers to include music

activities as part of their curriculum,

3) classroom teachers' lack of knowledge in teaching music,
4) inconsistent scheduling of music classes,
5) not enough certified music specialists available for all schools,
6) substitute teachers without proper teaching certification teaching music classes,
7) not considering the arts as a legitimate part of academic programs,
8) lack of understanding among educators and parents of the importance of arts education
9) not enough allotted time in the class schedule for arts programs nation-wide.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of probable cause data suggested reasons related to why the arts are not taught consistently. The research literature also suggested causes related to lack of teacher knowledge about how to teach the arts in the classroom and insufficient curricular time given to arts classes.

The literature search for solution strategies was organized according to probable data. Analysis of this data raised two questions about the arts in education that need to be addressed.

The questions related to arts in education are:

1) Why should the arts be a core part of the educational curriculum and not be considered as just a frill?
2) How do the arts create children who are better learners?

These questions suggested the appropriate categories involving the literature search should include: contributions of the arts and their role in education, the arts and motivating students and the arts and their connection with life skills.

The ways the arts can benefit young minds are:

1) Stimulates children's learning ability
2) Contributes to improved test scores and achievement levels
3) Aids children's understanding of other subjects
4) Enhances children's self-esteem and productivity
5) Stimulates children's creativity
6) Enlightens children about the arts effect on every day life
7) Prepares children for the workplace (Thomas, 1992).

The arts teach children that not all problems have a single, correct answer. The arts also teach children that goals need to be flexible. Lessons taught by the arts are closer to what cognitive psychologists are finding make up the most sophisticated forms of thinking. Solving complex problems require attention to wholes. Purposes and goals must remain flexible in order to explore opportunities one can not foresee. These cognitive virtues are taught in every true work of art (Eisner, 1992).

Solution strategy possibilities that addressed the arts' role in education and student motivation discussed the use of hands-on activities using the arts. A program called Learning through an Expanded Arts Program (L.E.A.P.) in New York City "found that stimulation and involvement generated through hands-on experiences with art and music can help students learn academic subjects" (Dean and Gross, 1992 p. 614).

During the past twelve years, L.E.A.P. has served 400,000 students in grades K-8. Eighty-five consultants worked with students and their teachers. The consultants trained the teachers to develop and use innovative ways of teaching the academic curriculum using the arts. The consultant team taught with classroom teachers who learned to repeat the projects on their own. All L.E.A.P. projects focused on enhancing the students' basic skills. Assignments that were part of the L.E.A.P. program gave students opportunities for personal expression and success instead of the threat of shame and failure (Dean and Gross, 1992).

Educators involved in L.E.A.P. knew that many students fail in school because they do not learn in traditional ways. Dean and Gross (1992 p. 618) also stated that students who participated in the program achieved the following:

"1) Ninety-three point four percent developed a better understanding of the subject matter,

2) Ninety-five percent strengthened their problem-solving skills,

3 Ninety-six percent strengthened their creative thinking skills,

4) Ninety-three percent gained self-discipline,

5) Ninety-seven percent had a more positive attitude towards school."

In addition to student progress, 97 percent of the teachers said they would repeat the projects on their own.

Dean and Gross (1992 p. 618) said "using art and music to teach basic skills creates an atmosphere that makes learning possible by making it fun."

Another school that replaced their old curriculum with an arts-based curriculum was St. Augustine School in the South Bronx. They changed their name to St. Augustine School of the Arts and used an arts-based curriculum. Their enrollment increased dramatically. Students gained proficiency in the arts and 98 percent of the students met New York state academic standards. Students attending another public school a few blocks away came from the same neighborhood. Fewer than half of these students were reading at their grade level (Hanna, 1992).

New York inner-city students involved in another arts

program called "Young Talent Dance Program" had equal or better academic achievement than their peers as measured by standardized reading and math tests (Hanna, 1992).

Standardized tests scores in Sampson County, North Carolina, went up two years in a row. The only change the school district made was the introduction of arts education into their curriculum (Hanna, 1992).

National Center for Education Statistics state that secondary students', who concentrate in the arts, grade point averages are generally higher than students not involved in the arts. A student who concentrates in the arts is defined as earning more than three credits in any combination of arts classes (Hanna, 1992).

Profiles of students from 1987, 1988, and 1989 compiled by the College Board showed that students who take arts courses have higher Scholastic Aptitude Test (S.A.T.) scores (Hanna, 1992).

Radner and Prole (1993) state that the arts can combine creative problem-solving and critical thinking with creative expression. An arts agenda for schools that Radner and Prole (1993) suggest would incorporate arts in classroom instruction, develop specialized arts programs, include parental involvement and provide workshops for teachers.

Guidelines suggested by Snyder (1993), in lessons designed to connect reading with music, are as follows:

1) Think conceptually,

2) If there is no conceptual connection, sound or movement might

highlight the mood of the story,

3) Use songs to connect with the theme of the story,

4) Audio cassettes may be created to go along with stories or poems.

Snyder (1993) states that music and language are two forms of communication.

Solution strategies involving life skills addressed how arts education can promote social relations, stimulate personal development and create productive citizens (Hanna, 1992). The arts can also help keep students in school and improve high school graduation rates as well as create a disciplined environment (Hanna, 1992).

"Attendance records, tests scores and graduation rates from different kinds of schools nationwide that offer arts education attest to the fact that arts can "grab" many at-risk youngsters' attention by offering immediacy and active involvement of mind and soul" (Hanna, 1992 p. 603).

A study of effective desegregated schools using statistical data from 200 southern high schools found that "the arts contributed to desegregation, positive self-esteem and academic achievement" (Hanna, 1992).

The research on questions related to why the arts should be a core part of the curriculum suggested that nation-wide tests scores have increased for schools that have made their curriculum art-based. The research also suggested that the arts help students develop thinking skills (Hanna, 1992).

The research stated that students involved in arts programs

are motivated to stay in school and learn because of their involvement with the arts. In addition to motivating students, the arts teach students to become more productive citizens (Hanna, 1992).

The research on questions related to how the arts help students become better learners suggested that creative expression used in the teaching of the arts help students become better thinkers and problem solvers (Radner and Prole, 1993).

Project Outcomes

The first terminal objective of this problem intervention was related to the standardized tests scores presented in Chapter Two. The test results indicated that 51 percent of the first grade students' reading scores were in the 26-75 percentile range. Thirty-seven percent of the students scored below average. Forty-six percent of the students' total math scores were in the 26-75 percentile range. Thirty-two percent of the students scored below average. Compared to local total reading scores, 57 percent scored in the 25-75 percentile range. Twenty-nine percent of the students scored below average. Fifty-three percent of the students scored in the 26-75 percentile range in total math scores. Thirty-two percent of the students scored below average. The data indicated that approximately one-third of the first grade students' academic skills were at or below the average level.

Probable cause data presented in the last section of Chapter Two and solution strategies presented in the first section in

the first section of this chapter suggested the integration of the arts into the academic curriculum helps improve children's test scores and thinking skills. Therefore:

> As a result of integrating music into the first grade curriculum during the period from October, 1993 to February, 1994, the first grade target group will improve their academic skills as measured by teacher observation.

The probable cause gathered from literature suggested a need to use the arts in all areas of learning. Probable cause data gathered from the site of the study indicated first grade teachers had not used music consistently. The data also indicated that the first grade teachers had not team-taught with the music specialist in the past. Therfore, a second terminal objective said that:

> The use of whole language activities in music class during the period from October, 1993 to February, 1994, will improve reading comprehension and skills of the target first grade class as measured by teacher observation, student journals and student projects.

In order to achieve the terminal objectives, the following process objectives defined the strategies proposed for problem resolution.

1) As a result of attending a whole language workshop during August of 1993, the music specialist will be better able to integrate music with the first grade curriculum.

2) As a result of the implementation of rhythmic activities involving nursery rhymes and poetry during the period from October, 1993 to February, 1994, the target first grade group will improve math and reading skills as measured by the teachers' class observations.

3) As a result of a journal kept by the music specialist during the period from October, 1993 to February, 1994, the movement and whole language activities used in music class will be assessed concerning their impact on the target group.

4) As a result of weekly communication between the

music specialist and the target group's classroom teacher, music activities during the period from October of 1993 to February of 1994 will follow the first grade curriculum.

5) As a result of a journal kept by the targeted first grade students, the music specialist will be able to assess the students' learning from the whole language and rhythm activities used in music class.

Proposal Solution Components

The major components used in the approach to integrate music with the first grade curriculum fell into two categories: those strategies used to correlate with the first grade reading curriculum and those rhythmic strategies used to reinforce reading and math skills.

These two components related to the terminal objectives in that they attempted to create a change in the first grade curriculum through the integration of music with classroom activities as presented by the music specialist.

Chapter 4

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Description of Problem Resolution Activities

The action plan is designed to address two major solution components. The components are the use of whole language activities in music class and the increased use of rhythmic activities in music class.

The implementation of whole language activities will begin in August of 1993. The music specialist will attend a week long whole language workshop presented by Dr. Sue Snyder. Before the start of school, the music specialist and the targeted group's classroom teacher will meet to discuss the reading program for the 1993-1994 school year. The use of whole language activities in music class will begin in October of 1993.

The use of rhythmic activities will begin with the targeted first grade during their first music period of the 1993-1994 school year. The music specialist will introduce the targeted group to the movement of the beat during the first music period and continue to do so during every music period after that. Movement to the beat is an essential part of any music program.

The implementation or action plan is presented below in outline form.

1. Increase the use of whole language activities during music class.

A. Who: The music specialist and the targeted group's classroom teacher will work together.

B. What: The music specialist will use music activities that support the classroom teacher's reading program.

C. When: This will occur during the 1993-1994 school year.

D. Where: The intervention will take place at the targeted group's elementary school.

E. How: The music specialist will attend whole language workshops prior and during the school year. This will assist the music specialist in creating whole language activities that will go along with the targeted group's reading program.

F. Why: The use of whole language activities will be used to help increase the reading comprehension and reading skills of the targeted group.

2. Increase the use of prewriting and writing skills in music class.

A. Who: The music specialist will implement this strategy.

B. What: The music specialist will provide ten minutes a week for the students to write in their journals.

C. When: The writing activity will take place every Friday during the last ten minutes of music class.

D. How: The students will bring their writing supplies every Friday to music class. They will create a journal folder to keep their writing in. Each Friday, they will be asked to either write or draw about their favorite music activity of the week.

E. Why: Increasing writing activities help children's reading skills. The journals will also give the music specialist feedback about the activities that are being done in music class.

3. Increase the use of nursery rhymes and rhythmic poetry in music class.

   A. Who: The music specialist will implement this strategy.

   B. What: Nursery rhymes and rhythmic poetry will be used in music class to help develop the targeted group's sense of rhythm.

   C. When: The use of nursery rhymes and rhythmic poetry will occur at least once every week during the targeted group's music class times.

   D. How: The music specialist will recite the nursery rhyme or poem first. The children will chant along as they learn it. Sometimes, the rhyme or poem will be written on a chart for the group to see. After the poem or rhyme has been learned, the music specialist will do different activities with it. The activities will include ideas such as moving to the poem or rhyme, playing instruments in different ways with the poem or rhyme, learning different rhythm patterns in the poem or rhyme and playing singing games with the poem or rhyme.

   E. Why: Children who are able to keep a beat and have a sense of rhythm become better readers and learners. The children will also learn to read the nursery rhymes and poems through this strategy.

4. Increase the use of movement activities in music class.

   A. Who: The music specialist will implement this strategy.

   B. What: Students will move to music and rhythm experiences in different ways.

   C. When: Movement experiences will take place every week during the three music periods that the targeted group meets with the music specialist.

   D. How: The movement experiences will occur in several different formats. Sometimes, the movement will be as simple as using patschen to the beat of a song or a chant. Movement will develop to using more than one movement to keep a beat. Students will be asked to move their feet to the beat of a drum. They will mirror what the music specialist is doing in different types of dances. Students will be asked to create their own movements to the beat of music or sounds. Opportunities will be provided for students to create their own movements cooperatively with partners or in groups.

   E. Why: Movement helps the child feel and see the beat and rhythm of music. Being able to keep a beat and having a sense of rhythm help children become better readers and learners. Showing the beat and rhythm physically will also help a child transfer the beat or rhythm onto an instrument.

Methods of Assessment

Assessment methods used to measure the effects of the

intervention will be varied. Reading comprehension and skills will be measured by teacher-made tests as well as formal class observation.

The impact of the lessons taught in music class will be documented by journal entries kept by the music specialist. The entries will discuss the lesson and the student's reaction to the lesson. Conversations between the music specialist and the targeted group's teacher will be used to document the impact of transfer from music class to the classroom.

Chapter 5

EVALUATION OF RESULTS AND PROCESS

Implementation History

The terminal objectives of the intervention addressed the integration of music into the first grade curriculum. Tests scores of first grade students indicated that a majority of the students were struggling with math and reading skills. Other data collected indicated that the first grade teachers had not consistently taught music in their classrooms or team-taught with the music specialist. Therefore, the terminal objectives stated :

> As a result of integrating music into the first grade curriculum during the period from October, 1993 to February, 1994, the first grade target group will improve their academic skills as measured by teacher observation and student work.

> The use of whole language activities in music class during the period from October, 1993 to February, 1994, will improve reading comprehension and skills of the target first grade as measured by teacher observation, student journals and student projects.

The development of a curricular program to address the inconsistency of integrating music with the first grade curriculum began with a review of the music curriculum in May of 1993. The music specialist analyzed what was taught during music class as compared to what was taught in the first grade classroom and found a lack of integration between the two. A teacher survey completed by the first grade teachers in September

of 1993 found that the first grade teachers had not taught music consistently and they had not team-taught with the music specialist (Appendix A). The need to integrate music with the first grade curriculum was obvious and the music specialist selected a target group to work with.

During August of 1993, the music specialist attended a whole language workshop presented by Dr. Sue Snyder, a music educator who has developed music programs integrating music with the language arts. The workshop demonstrated how to create a musical experience in the language arts by presenting many different lessons. The people attending the workshop were also given opportunities to create their own music lesson using several forms of the language arts.

The week before the start of the 1993-1994 school year, the music specialist met with the school's principal, art and physical education specialists to request scheduling the targeted first grade group for three music periods a week. The schedule was arranged so the targeted group would have music on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday for thirty minutes each session.

During September of 1993, the music specialist met with the targeted group's classroom teacher. They discussed what stories the children would be reading and other concepts they would be learning during the next month.

Beginning in October of 1993, the music specialist taught music using stories and concepts the children were studying in their classroom. Whenever the music specialist taught a story, she would use "big books" or the regular sized book as she sang

or read the story so the children could see the words.

The first story the music specialist used in October was Mary Wore Her Red Dress and Henry Wore His Green Sneakers (Peek, 1985). The classroom teacher was using this story to teach colors. The music specialist used this story during three music periods. Throughout the three music periods, the story was taught through movement, song and instrumentation. Instrumentation was playing one specific instrument on the same word each time it occurs in the story (Appendix B).

The next story used to teach colors was Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See (Martin, 1983). This story was taught using song and instrumentation on the different color words. Word cards, a card with one specific word written on it, were also used to help the children learn the color words (Appendix C).

The children were also studying the alphabet during this time. The story Chick a Chick a Boom Boom (Martin, 1989) was used by the classroom teacher and the music specialist in teaching the alphabet. The children learned to chant this story with the steady beat. Instrumentation was also used on certain phrases that were repeated several times. The children learned to read the words of the repeated phrases (Appendix D).

The Gingerbread Man was a story used in the classroom during the end of October of 1993. The lesson in music involved acting the story out and using instruments for different characters in the story (Appendix E).

During October of 1993 and the first two weeks of November

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of 1993, the targeted first grade wrote in a journal each Friday when they came to music. They were asked to write or draw about their favorite music activity during the week.

During the first week of November of 1993, the children read The Big Red Apple. When this story was done in music class, the children acted the story out, used instrumentation for the characters and used word cards (Appendix F).

After Thanksgiving vacation of 1993, the targeted group along with all the kindergarten and other first grade classes began to practice for a special program to be presented on December 16, 1993. During this time period, the music specialist was unable to follow the first grade curriculum because of the time needed to rehearse for the program. However, the song "Skip to My Lou" was included in the program. The words to the song were taught by using an adapted version by Nadine Bernard Westcott. The words of the story were in a big book with several new verses. The students learned to read the story as well as sing it. The physical education specialist created a dance to go along with the story.

Meetings between the music specialist and the targeted group's classroom teacher did not occur every week as stated in Chapter 4. Because of the lack of time in their schedules, they were able to meet once a month to discuss the curriculum.

During January of 1994, the students were studying farm animals. A story the music specialist used to teach farm animals was Fiddle i Fee (Galdone, 1985). The big book was used to teach the words to the story. The students learned the story through

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song, movement and instrumentation. After they performed the story, the students worked with partners and drew the animals in the order they appeared in the story (Appendix G).

The theme during the month of February was the solar system. The music specialist taught songs along with the classroom teacher about the solar system (Appendix H). The music specialist also used some creative movement involving astronauts. The students listened to " The Planets " by Gustav Holst during one music period. This lesson involved drawing planets and other heavenly bodies. The students were also asked to describe the way the music sounded for four of the planets (Appendix I).

Throughout the time period from October of 1993 to February of 1994, the target group was exposed to nursery rhymes or poetry every week in music class. The poems or nursery rhymes were used to teach rhythm and reading. The children listened to the poem or nursery rhyme as the music specialist recited the words. The words were written on big chart paper for the students to see. After the music specialist recited the poems or nursery rhymes, she would recite a phrase at a time and the children would echo back. After the children became familiar with the words, the music specialist would teach the rhythm patterns of the words. The children would move to the rhythm, play the rhythm of the words on instruments or sing the words of the nursery rhyme or poem.

Once the children became familiar with the rhythm patterns of the words, they were introduced to the written rhythm

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patterns. The rhythm patterns were written without the words and the children would clap them and play them on instruments. Once the children went through this entire process, they would see the words again and chant or sing the nursery rhyme or poem.

Presentation and Analysis of Project Results

The assessment of the intervention was done through teacher observation, student journals and student projects as stated in the terminal objectives. The effects of the intervention were documented through a journal kept by the music specialist, a student survey given at the end of the intervention and an interview with the classroom teacher.

The journal kept by the music specialist discussed the success or failure of music lessons taught specifically as part of the classroom curriculum. The journal writings stated that most of the lessons were successful. However, several lessons had to be done twice the first month of the intervention before the children were successful with it. Once the students were accustomed to the procedures developed by the music specialist, the lessons were successful during the first attempt.

The journal writings indicated that students were successful in learning to read big book stories. Association with an instrument and a word card was a successful method in teaching students specific words in the story.

Figure 1 summarizes the responses given by the students in a post-intervention survey (Appendix J). Questions asked

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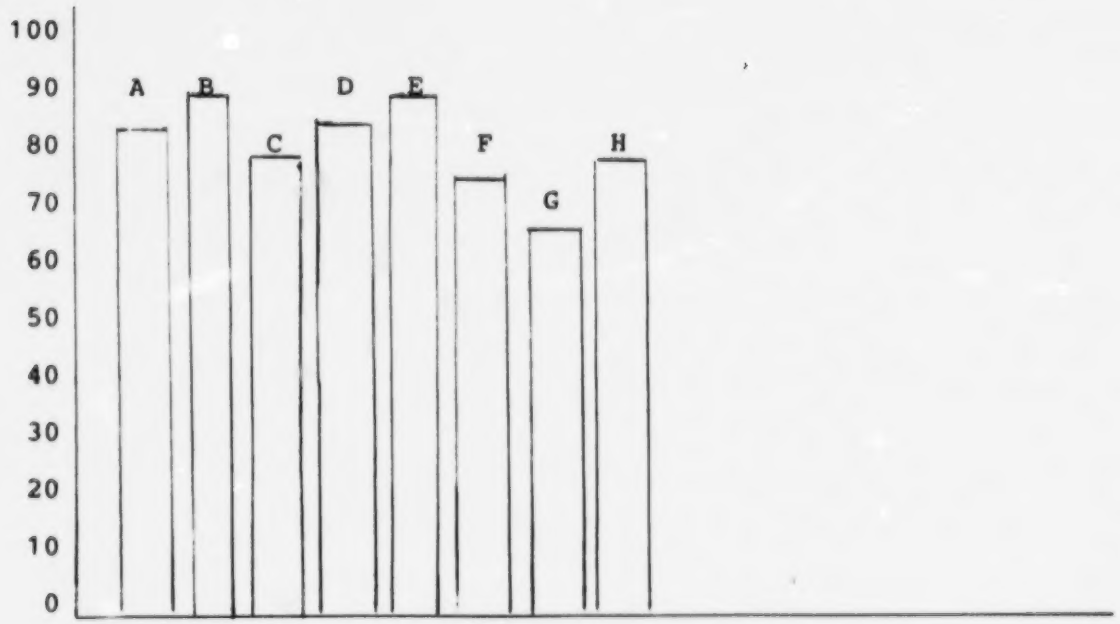

Figure 1

Summary of Findings of Post-Intervention Student Survey

(March, 1994)

A = % of students who enjoyed having stories read to them in music class
B = % of students who liked playing instruments with stories
C = % of students who liked acting out stories
D = % of students who understood stories better when playing instruments with it
E = % of students who felt singing a story helped them learn to read
F = % of students who enjoyed drawing stories
G = % of students who liked using the same stories in music class that their classroom teacher used
H = % of students who wanted to continue doing stories in music class

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in the survey involved the integration of the classroom literature with music activities. Eighty-two percent of the students enjoyed having stories read to them in music class. Eighty-eight percent of the students liked playing instruments with the stories. Seventy-six percent of the students liked acting out the stories. Eighty-eight percent of the students felt singing a story helped them learn to read it. Seventy-one percent of the students enjoyed drawing pictures of the stories. Sixty-five percent of the students liked using the same stories in music class that their classroom teacher used. Seventy-six percent of the students wanted to continue using stories in music class.

The results of this survey indicated that the majority of the target group enjoyed the intervention. The results of the survey also showed the majority of the target group felt making stories into a musical experience helped them understand the stories better. The majority of the group also felt using music helped them learn to read the stories.

Student journals were kept during October and the beginning of November. The writings in the student journals indicated that music activities integrated with the classroom curriculum were the activities most of the students enjoyed during the week. The journal writing ceased in the middle of November because of the time devoted to preparing for the Winter program. After the program, music time on Friday afternoon was cut down to between twenty-five and twenty minutes because of other activities the children were involved with. This did not allow

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enough time for journal writing by the students in music class.

The target group's classroom teacher noticed a definite carry over from the lessons taught in music class. She felt the music lessons helped the students learn to read the stories better. She said using music was very valuable in teaching the children to read. The classroom teacher would like to continue integrating music with the curriculum. In her opinion, it would be ideal if the current system of allotted music, art and physical education times could be changed. Instead of the thirty or forty minute time slots that are now allotted to the specialists, it would be beneficial to the students if the classroom teachers and the three specialists would team teach to fully integrate the curriculum. Each teacher would teach their part of the lesson and use the amount of time needed to completely finish the lesson.

Reflections and Conclusions

The intervention assisted in improving the target group's reading and comprehension skills taught by the classroom teacher and the music specialist. This was accomplished through revisions of the methods used by the music specialist in teaching music.

An important component of the method revisions was the communication between the music specialist and the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher would let the music specialist know what was being taught in the target group's classroom.

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The music specialist would develop music lessons that would reinforce the concepts being taught in the classroom. A literature list used by the music specialist and classroom teacher appears in appendix K.

The methods used by the music specialist not only reinforced what the students were learning, they also used different thinking skills and other forms of intelligences than what the classroom teacher used.

The staff development component of the intervention was also very important to the music specialist. Whole language training grew out of a need for the music specialist to gain knowledge in using music with literature. A school board approved workshop was available prior to the beginning of the school year. Inservice training was also available on teacher institute days.

The kindergarten and first grade teaching staff were a great support during the intervention. The staff would provide information on integrated curriculum for the music specialist. The music specialist would use this information when developing some of the lessons for the target group's music time.

As the intervention progressed throughout the year, a constraining factor that occurred repeatedly was the lack of adequate time available to implement the lessons thoroughly. This was due to the music specialist's very rigid time schedule. Some lessons would have to end in the middle because it would be time for another class to have music. The lesson would continue during the next music period but the momentum of the

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lesson would sometimes be lost.

The enthusiasm of the target group was important in ensuring the success of the intervention. They enjoyed most of the lessons and were willing to try new ideas with the music specialist.

Chapter 6

DECISIONS ON THE FUTURE

The Solution Strategy

The data indicate that integrating music with the classroom curriculum should continue. However, more planning, inservice and classroom time are needed to be able to thoroughly follow through with lessons. A major frustration of this researcher was the short amount of class time allotted to her for finishing lessons. Many times the thirty minute session would be over before the lesson was finished. The amount of time for planning with the classroom teacher was limited because of the busy schedules they both had.

Given the ideal situation, the music specialist's music periods should be lengthened from thirty minutes to forty minutes. This would allow more time to finish lessons with closure. Too many lessons during the intervention did not have closure because it was time to go back to the classroom. One planning time a week should be built into the classroom teacher and music specialist's schedules to allow time for them to discuss what they are doing with the students.

The school district should provide more workshop and inservice training on integrating music with the classroom curriculum. These training sessions should be available for both classroom teachers and music specialists. The workshop taught by Dr. Sue Snyder during August of 1993, was the first of its kind available for the school district's teachers.

Additional Applications

This intervention involved first grade. In order to provide a fully integrated curriculum, music should be integrated at all grade levels. The elementary level in this school district includes grades kindergarten through sixth grade. The music specialist meets with each class anywhere from one to three times a week. The music specialist could work with all the classroom teachers in order to integrate the curriculum with music. However, the task of integrating music should not be solely the music specialist's responsibility. The classroom teachers should also be able to integrate music with their curricula, If classroom teachers need assistance in doing this, the music specialist should be available to give ideas and help out. Classroom teachers' schedules are not as rigid as the music specialists'. This would allow for classroom teachers to thoroughly teach a lesson.

Dissemination of Data and Recommendations

The results of this intervention should be shared with other elementary music specialists throughout the district and other elementary school professionals. Elementary music specialists meet four times a year for inservice training. One of the training sessions during the year could be on integrating the classroom curriculum with music. The training would share

data from this intervention as well as ideas for lessons.

Other elementary professionals should be made aware of the importance of integrating music with the classroom curriculum. A team of music specialists and classroom teachers should be formed to plan a workshop on this subject. The team would be available for institute days and individual school's meeting times. The workshop would model lessons for the participants and give them an opportunity for hands on experiences in creating their own lessons. Throughout the workshop, data from research should be provided to substantiate integrating music with the classroom curriculum.

This action research project has confirmed, for me, the importance of music as a core part of the elementary curriculum. I believe music is an important part of children's learning process. I would suggest that music specialists use their knowledge and work cooperatively with classroom teachers to integrate curricula. Many administrators and school board members think that what is taught in music class is the result of two or three programs a year. I would strongly recommend administrators and school board members visit music classes so they see a more realistic view of what type of learning goes on. If teachers, administrators and school members are exposed to the type of learning that goes on in an integrated music class, music should no longer be thought of as a frill and taken seriously.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

INTEGRATING MUSIC INTO THE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

- TEACHER SURVEY -

1. How often do you feel music should be integrated with the reading curriculum?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a while	Once a month	Once a week	Once a day

2. How often do you feel music should be integrated with the rest of the first grade curriculum?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a while	Once a month	Once a week	Once a day

3. How often do you teach music as a separate subject?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a while	Once a month	Once a week	Once a day

4. How often do you integrate music with other subjects you teach?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a while	Once a month	Once a week	Once a day

5. How often do you work together with the music specialist to integrate music with the curriculum?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a while	Once a month	Once a week	Once a day

6. If you work with a music specialist, how often does your class meet with her during the week?

1	2	3	4	5
Day	Days	Days	Days	Days

7. What subject areas would you want the music specialist to participate in?

Appendix B

MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of October 4, 1993 - Day 1 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
Color identification rhythm of the words	Read Story, Mary Wore Her Red Dress and Henry Wore His Green Sneakers Teach song at the end of the book. Children get in groups of three and are assigned one of the colors. They are to make up a simple motion to the rhythm of the colored piece of clothing. Do motion each time their words occur in the song	

EVALUATION

Needed 5 minutes of practice - Students followed along quite well the second time through.

MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of Oct. 4 - Day 2 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
Instrumentation Rhythm of the words	Mary Wore Her Red Dress Assign an instrument for each colored piece of clothing. Use word cards with the two words (eg. red dress) on them. Put the cards on the floor and have the children take an instrument and sit behind correct card. As we sing the song, they play the instrument on the correct words.	

EVALUATION

Students were able to play the rhythm of the words correctly but couldn't sing the song at the same time.

DPT

MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of October 4 - Day 3 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
Instrumentation ♩♩♪ rhythm pattern	Mary Wore Her Red Dress Sing song with same instrumention as day 2. Introduce ♩♩♪ rhythm pattern with words "All night long"	

EVALUATION . Children were able to sing song and play instruments at the same time. (Practice makes perfect!)

DPT

Appendix C
MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of October 11, 1993 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS

Color identification
sol-mi-la-sol-mi
solfeg

SONGS OR ACTIVITIES

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

Sing song using sol-mi-la-sol-mi melody (teach hand signals)
Hold up word cards with colors on it.
Pick instruments for each color - put cards on floor - Children pick instruments and sit behind appopriate card - sing song & play instruments

SOURCES

EVALUATION

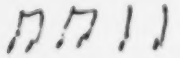
This lesson worked well. (Use again!)

DPT

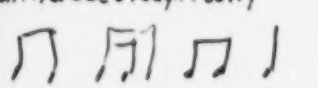
Appendix D
MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of October 18, 1993 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS



Chick-a-Chick a boom boom
will there be e nough room



Skit Skat Skoodle- doot Flip- Flop Flee

SONGS OR ACTIVITIES

Read story Chick-a-Chick-a Boom Boom -

Children learn phrase "Chick-a-chick-a Boom Boom will there be enough room" and "Skit skat skoodle doot Flip Flop Flee"

As they learn phrases, teach rhythm of words - put rhythm on board clap rhythms as I read story Next time through use drum on ♫♫♫!! rhythm and woods on !! ♫♫ !! rhythm.

SOURCES

EVALUATION

Had to repeat lesson with instruments - second time through, children played instruments correctly and read story with me.

DPr

Appendix E
MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of Oct 25 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
Concept of instrument playing	The story of Thanksgiving -	
	Teach story - read as many times as you can - you can discuss the Indians and the pilgrims - read story - put words on the board -	
	Assign one xylophone and rhythm instrument to each character in the story. Each character has a specific rhythm pattern to play. Pick children to act out story.	
	As - read the story, the children act it out and play correct instrument on their assigned character	

EVALUATION - Good lesson - children really enjoyed it -

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Dpm

Appendix F
MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of November 1, 1993 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS

Character recognition
Correct instrumentation on each character

SONGS OR ACTIVITIES

Story The Big Red Apple

Read story and review characters. - Pick eight actors to act out story. Assign ten instruments - one for each character plus one for the apple and one for the wind
Line up instruments with ten word cards on the floor.
Read story with instruments and actors.

SOURCES

EVALUATION

- Had to do lessons two times. The first time the students were not sure of what to do. Second time through, they were more sure of themselves.

Dpr

Appendix G

MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of Jan. 6, 1994 - Jan.

Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
Animal words in story -	Read - Eddie-I-Fee Show animal words or word cards Assign groups of three an animal. They are to make up a motion for their animal As I read the story, the groups do their motions	

EVALUATION - Lesson went well

MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of Jan. 6, 1994 - Jan. 2

Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
Animal words in story Correct instrumentation for each animal	Review Eddie-I-Fee by teaching song of story Get in same groups from previous lesson. Give them the card with their animal on it and an instrument. As we sing story, they play their instrument for their word.	

EVALUATION

Good lesson -

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DPT

Appendix H

- Solar System Songs -

1. " An Adventure in Space ", On the Move with Greg and Steve, Youngheart Records.

2. " The Cat Came Back (Again)", The Polka Dot Pony, Fred Penner, Shoreline Records.

3. " The Planets ", Gustav Holst.

4. " Rainbow Planet ", Rainbow Planet - Jim Valley & Friends, Rainbow Planet Songs.

5. " Space Explorer ", Witches' Brew, Hap Palmer, Educational Activities, Inc.

Appendix I
MUSIC LESSON PLANS

Week of February 7, 1994 Grade 1st

CONCEPTS	SONGS OR ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
- listening to the music - [illegible] the music from "The Planets" by Gustav [illegible]	Mars, Venus, Mercury - [illegible] from the Planets" by Gustav [illegible] As the class listens to these four selections, they will draw pictures of the solar system when each selection is finished, select from list or board to describe what they heard	

EVALUATION Students really enjoyed this!

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DPT

Appendix J

STUDENT SURVEY ON USING LITERATURE
IN MUSIC CLASS

1. Do you enjoy having stories read to you in music class?
2. Do you like it when we play instruments with the stories?
3. Do you like it when we act out the stories?
4. Do you understand the stories better when we play instruments with it?
5. Does singing a story help you learn to read it?
6. Do you enjoy drawing stories?
7. Do you like it when we do the same stories in music class that you read with your classroom teacher?
8. Which story did you like the best in music class this year?
9. Do you want to continue doing stories in music class?

Appendix K

Literature List

1. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Martin, 1983, Holt and Company, New York, New York.

2. Chick A Chick A Boom Boom, Martin, 1989, Simon and Schuster, New York, New York.

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